

President Obama to *Politico*: *"I think it's fair to say, if six months ago, before this spill had happened, I had gone up to Congress and I had said we need to crack down a lot harder on oil companies and we need to spend more money on technology to respond in case of a catastrophic spill, there are folks up there, who will not be named, who would have said this is classic, big-government overregulation and wasteful spending."*

WASHINGTON. D.C. – In an [interview with *Politico*'s Roger Simon](#), President Barack Obama accused some in Congress of being hypocritical in their assessment of the Administration's handling of the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA), who will survey areas in and around New Orleans that have been affected by the spill on Monday characterized the President's fictitious scenario as a poor excuse for his Administration's inaction in addressing the dysfunctional and corrupt nature of the Minerals and Management Service (MMS).

"It's ironic and downright disingenuous for the President to try and deflect attention away from his policy of inaction by conjuring up this fantasy scenario where he blames Congress for stopping something he never even attempted to do," Issa said. "This President didn't hesitate to push through Congress a trillion-dollar stimulus bill, a trillion-dollar health care bill and somehow he has conjured up this fictitious scenario where Congress, after receiving ten Inspector General reports, ten GAO reports, and the findings of a congressional investigation, wouldn't agree to reform MMS? If President Obama had exercised some long overdue leadership and called on Congress to address the cozy relationship between MMS and the industry they regulate, I would have been the very first to partner with him and give MMS the overhaul it desperately needs."

Last October, Issa introduced [H.R. 3736](#), which would strip the Department of the Interior of its management responsibilities for the Minerals Management Service (MMS) and make the troubled collector of oil, mineral, and natural gas revenues an independent agency. The case for the legislation is made in an [Oversight and Government Reform Committee Republican staff report](#)

, which concludes MMS will benefit from a divorce from the Department of the Interior and the creation of dedicated funding, a new management structure, and leadership focused on MMS' unique role in collecting royalties owed to the American people.

Despite these efforts, President Obama [told Politico](#): "Some of the same folks who have been hollering and saying 'do something' are the same folks who, just two or three months ago, were suggesting that government needs to stop doing so much. Some of the same people who are saying the president needs to show leadership and solve this problem are some of the same folks who, just a few months ago, were saying this guy is trying to engineer a takeover of our society through the federal government that is going to restrict our freedoms."

"The President likes to talk about accountability, but in the same breathe, looks for anyone else to blame but himself," Issa noted. "I don't know where President Obama gets his information, but the problems at MMS have been exhaustively documented and have spanned the better part of the three Administrations," Issa said. "Nothing was precluding him from taking action the minute he was sworn in, but it wasn't until a catastrophe hit that this became a

top priority.”

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